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REMARKS

**REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF STATE COLIN L. POWELL
TO THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

**NDK Conference Site
Sofia, Bulgaria
December 7, 2004**

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I join my colleagues in thanking you, your government and the Bulgarian people for so graciously hosting us and for serving so successfully as our Chairman-in-Office. The United States looks forward to close cooperation with next year's Chairman-in-Office, our distinguished colleague who we are very pleased to see here today from Slovenia Dimitrij Rupel. All the best to you, Dimitrij.

Friends: The Helsinki process has been and remains a key catalyst for peaceful, democratic change. My personal experience with the Helsinki process dates from 1990, when as Chairman of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff I represented the United States at the first Military Doctrine seminar, which was held in the Hall of the Congress in Vienna. And it was a fascinating moment for me to sit with all of the military leaders from throughout Europe--NATO, the Warsaw Pact and all of the other non-aligned nations of Europe--for the first time. A new era of hope had just dawned for a Europe whole, free and at peace.

We can be proud of our accomplishments, but we also know that Helsinki's great promise has yet to be realized in many important areas.

Within our OSCE community, incidents of anti-Semitism, racism, hate crimes and discrimination against Muslims are on the rise. We must renew our shared determination to combat racial and ethnic hatred, xenophobia and discrimination in all participating states.

In parts of our OSCE community, frozen conflicts still remain frozen fifteen years after the end of the Cold War. In the months since our last ministerial meeting, there has been little headway made toward resolution of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh or in breakaway regions of Moldova and Georgia. A new push from the OSCE and by the leaders of participating states is needed.

Russia's commitments to withdraw its military forces from Moldova, and to agree with Georgia on the duration of the Russian military presence there, remain unfulfilled. A core principle of the CFE Treaty is host country agreement to the stationing of forces. The United States remains committed to moving ahead with ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty, but we will only do so after all the Istanbul commitments on Georgia and Moldova have been met. And we stand ready to assist with reasonable costs associated with the implementation of those commitments.

We are closely following events in Ukraine, and heartened by efforts to ensure an outcome that reflects the will of the Ukrainian people and respects the rule of law. The international facilitators have provided valuable assistance. What is important now is for all sides to cooperate fully in the implementation of the December 3 decision of the Supreme Court.

All of us in the OSCE community have an interest in a swift, peaceful outcome through a democratic process. The Government of Ukraine expects the OSCE to observe the re-running of the second round, and we urge other participating states to join the United States in providing the OSCE with the resources, both fiscal and manpower resources, to carry out this mission.

At the same time, we continue to be concerned by the unfulfilled promises of democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms in some OSCE states. We remain concerned about developments in Russia, most notably those affecting freedom of the press and the rule of law. Belarus remains an egregious example of a participating state failing to live up to its OSCE commitments on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Some countries have recently argued that the OSCE's field work constitutes interference in internal affairs, that the OSCE has "double standards," and that the OSCE has concentrated its efforts in the former Soviet republics and has done it for political reasons. I categorically disagree. All OSCE participating states signed up to the proposition that fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are of legitimate concern to us all.

OSCE's 17 field missions are among its most important assets. The missions are working for democracy, human rights and conflict resolution, and, they're working from the Balkans to Central Asia. In Georgia, the OSCE's Border Monitoring Operation is contributing to stability on a sensitive border, and its mandate should be extended for another year. We all need to make sure that the missions have the support and the resources necessary to do their jobs.

For our part, the United States takes seriously its commitments to respect human rights, practice democratic government and uphold the rule of law. We have sought to lead by example with transparency and openness. At the OSCE's annual human dimension meeting, we hosted a side event on the abuse of detainees in U.S. custody in Iraq. These

abuses were contrary to U.S. law and policy, and the United States chose to organize this event to show the steps being taken to investigate and hold accountable those responsible.

The United States bases its faith in the OSCE's future not just on past successes, but on the significant contributions this pioneering organization is making today. In the past twelve months alone, the record has been impressive. The OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly undertook a Herculean effort to mobilize swiftly to observe and facilitate two seminal national elections in Georgia. And, in response to a request for help from Afghanistan, the OSCE sent its first election assistance team outside Europe and Eurasia.

OSCE's was the leading voice from Kabul that reassured the world that the outcome of the election truly reflected the choice of the Afghan people. The OSCE's landmark work in fighting intolerance has become the standard by which other organizations' efforts are measured. And the OSCE has adopted concrete steps to combat international terrorism and trafficking in persons.

The United States always welcomes suggestions for ways to further strengthen the OSCE. We are open to increasing the OSCE's activities to promote security and economic development, but not at the expense of the OSCE's core democracy and human rights work.

Here in Sofia, the OSCE must continue to advance an active and ambitious agenda. The United States strongly supports the creation of special representatives to address anti-Semitism, racism and discrimination, and anti-Muslim sentiment. We adopted new measures to fight corruption. And the OSCE would take an important step forward by responding positively to requests from the Palestinian Authority and from Iraq for election observers.

Mr. Chairman, Colleagues, I am confident that the OSCE will rise to the challenges of a changing Europe and a changing world. I am also confident that this valuable organization will continue to serve as a major force for human dignity, democracy, prosperity and security and will do so in the months and years to come and will do so successfully.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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